

TRAMS



HI

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

# Annual Report

2008 – 2009



▶ getting the highlands & islands back on board



### > Foreword



This has been a busy year for HITRANS as we have worked hard to support our member Councils, Government and other stakeholders to improve and develop transport services and infrastructure across the Region and to better link the Highlands and Islands with the rest of the country.

It has been a really important year for the Scottish transport community with the publication of the Strategic Transport Projects Review setting future policy planning in respect of our trunk road and rail networks. The commencement of the Scottish Ferries Review will help inform the future direction the delivery of our lifeline ferry networks will take. Important progress has also been made by Scottish Government on setting climate change policy, developing guidance on bus matters and protecting the national air Public Service Obligations for flights to Barra, Tiree and Campbeltown.

Things have changed in how we operate with our role becoming a supporting role to central and local Government partly through our engagement in community planning and directly with Government and its agencies on matters of cross boundary importance. We are working harder than ever to provide a single united voice for the Highlands and Islands on transport matters. This can rarely have been more noticeable than the skillful way the Partnership Board found real common ground and common purpose in our response to the Strategic Transport Projects Review. With a document like this there would always be winners and losers and while some Councils were

disappointed that key projects did not make the final cut we have supported their efforts to find a way forward while welcoming the projects that are included in the final list. We are now focusing our efforts to ensure key projects on the A9, A96, A82 and Highland rail lines are delivered at the earliest possible opportunity within the budgetary constraints that the nation must operate to. Our research and development budget has concentrated on developing projects that can have the maximum positive impact on sustainable economic development for the Highlands and Islands.

An important task HITRANS has performed has been to put in place arrangements that give those involved in providing and using transport services a voice in how these services are delivered. These stakeholder groups help improve dialogue between bus, rail, ferry, community & health transport and air service providers and their customers. This dialogue is improving understanding on both sides and will we believe improve customer satisfaction in the long term.

**Duncan MacIntyre**  
HITRANS Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D MacIntyre".

### › The HITRANS team

The HITRANS Board comprises a Councillor from each local authority area covered by the partnership and 2 non-council members appointed in a personal capacity by the Minister for Transport following open advertisement and selection.

The Board has appointed a group of professional advisers who play an important role, working with the executive team, in developing strategy. The executive team report to the Board.

#### Board

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre, Chair (Argyll and Bute Council)

Cllr John Laing, Deputy Chair (Highland Council)

Cllr Jim Foubister (Orkney Islands Council)

Cllr Donald Manford (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)

Cllr George McIntyre (Moray Council)

Wilson Metcalfe

Louise Smith



#### Advisors

Naomi Coleman (Orkney Islands Council)

Gareth Williams (Scottish Council for Development and Industry)

Robert Pollock (Argyll and Bute Council)

Donald MacRae (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)

Sam MacNaughton (Highland Council)

Tony Jarvis (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

Gordon Holland (Moray Council)

David Summers (Highlands and Islands Passenger Transport Coordinators Group)

#### Executive Team

Dave Duthie (Partnership Director)

Howard Brindley (Partnership Co-ordinator)

Katy Cunningham (Office Manager – Dalcross)

Christine Kendall (Office Manager – Lairg)

Frank Roach (Partnership Manager)

Ranald Robertson (Programme Manager)

### › The Regional Transport Strategy

The Transport Scotland Act 2005 placed the preparation of The Regional Transport Strategy as the first duty of the new Regional Transport Partnerships. Guidance from the Scottish Executive required the Strategy to be submitted to the Minister by the end of March 2007 which all the Partnerships including HITRANS achieved.



Following the Elections in May 2007 the Government asked that RTPs review their draft Strategies and that related interventions should be considered in separate Delivery Plans. The Strategies should be strategic high level documents that focus on the transport strategies necessary to support Government's key objectives and the Single Outcome Agreements of the constituent local authorities.

HITRANS strategic vision and objectives as included in the draft Strategy link very closely with those of Government and the review confirmed this synergy of purpose. The draft Strategy has been amended to identify the links between Government's aims and those of HITRANS and its constituent Councils.

The Minister approved the revised Strategy in August 2008.

The core of the Strategy can be viewed as 10 horizontal themes applying to the whole region which aim to:

- › Promote the long term development of walking and cycling.
- › Prepare a sub-strategy for investment in the region's bus services.
- › Enhance aviation connections between islands and peripheral areas and national gateways.
- › Improve the region's community and demand responsive transport provision.
- › Increase efficiency of urban travel by tackling congestion, reducing car use on short journeys, and improving public transport.
- › Assist freight transport to shift from road to less environmentally damaging modes.
- › Develop a programme of investment to improve the locally significant rural road network.
- › Prepare a sub-strategy for investment imports and ferries.
- › Develop initiatives to reduce the cost of travel.
- › Develop ways to reduce the climate change impact of transport in the region.

The Strategy also identifies policy for the transport network. Priority action is required:

- › to reduce journey times and increase journey reliability on our three strategic corridors linking the western parts of the region to Glasgow; the north of the region and the Inner Moray Firth to central Scotland; and Inverness to Aberdeen.
- › And on the regional network to improve the Orkney inter isles services; to improve the Western Isles spinal route and sea crossings; and to reduce journey times and increase reliability on the roads on Mull; the road between Oban and Lochgilphead; the roads to north west Sutherland and Wester Ross; and on the Moray Firth coastal route.

### › Supporting Single Outcome Agreements

The Concordat between the Scottish Government and CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) sets out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government that will underpin the funding provided to local government over the period 2008-09 to 2010-11.

A central proposal of this agreement is the creation of a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) between each Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government, based on achieving 15 key national outcomes agreed in the Concordat. The outcomes reflect the National Performance Framework and aim to deliver the National Purpose.

#### **Economic sustainability and growth**

In taking forward its focus on Sustainable Economic Growth HITRANS has completed the development of a Regional Transport Strategy which aims to deliver a more successful Highlands and Islands, with opportunities for the whole region to flourish, through increasing the competitiveness of the region as part of Scotland as a whole. Economic sustainability and growth is a core purpose for the HITRANS partnership, and to which all the constituent Local Authorities and Community Planning partners are committed, support and actively contribute where appropriate. The Strategy identifies how improvements in transportation across the Highlands and Islands can directly support the Government in achieving its National purpose across a number of its national outcome areas.

#### **Supporting the community**

The modern transport system that is detailed in The Regional Transport Strategy will support a smarter community through better access to learning opportunities. The Strategy and the joint working of the Partnership, its Councils and Community Planning



partners will help people across the Highlands and Islands to sustain and improve their health, ensuring faster, more reliable, and more affordable access to healthcare, and greater opportunities to lead an active lifestyle through active travel access to local services and facilities. HITRANS is actively engaging in the SOA process covering each of the five Community Planning Partnerships in our region.

### › European Funding

#### **Atlantic Area Programme – The START Project**

START is a transnational project relevant to cities and regions throughout the Atlantic Area and the whole of Europe.



It deals with the broad issue of the improvement of accessibility and internal links (Priority 1) by promoting interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality. This is critical to the success of regional and national sustainable development policies and is one of the key supporting pillars underpinning the European Spatial Development Perspective.

Furthermore, the convenience of travelling around the Atlantic Area using sustainable modes of transport is made difficult by differences in how the services are run by operators (e.g. ticket types), lack of knowledge of the local area (e.g. knowing when to get off the service), and language barriers (e.g. not being able to communicate with the driver).

HITRANS has secured funding for projects totalling €688,101 through our participation in START. This funding will allow HITRANS to implement a wide range of projects including improving bus services, extending coverage of intelligent transport system coverage of air, bus and ferry services.

The START Project commenced on 1st January 2009 and will cover a three year period to 31st December 2011.

#### **Northern Periphery Programme – The Clim-ATIC Project**

The overall objective of the Clim-ATIC project is to

establish a sustainable advice and training service for community climate change adaptation across the whole of the Northern Periphery. The project, and the eventual information, training, and advice service, will have a particular emphasis on identifying how climate change may bring opportunities for fostering the sustainability of communities in the Northern Periphery through local employment opportunities, social benefits, and environmental management.

HITRANS has engaged with local project partners including University of the Highlands and Islands and Cairngorm National Park Authority to fund and deliver project activities in the Cairngorm area. In particular HITRANS part funding the delivery of an electric vehicle (EV) trial in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. The project will demonstrate the practical aspects of the rural use of a community shared, used and administered Electric Vehicle (EV) in Cairngorms National Park (CNP). Based in Aviemore, but available and widely demonstrated around the Badenoch & Strathspey (B&S) area, it will be available to residents in the locality through the Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport Company (B&SCTC).

The project will run from January 2009 until February 2011. HITRANS contribution to the EV project is £15,000 of the total project costs.

### › Research And Strategy Development

#### Active Travel Regional Audits

The programme of Active Travel Audits identifying studying the barriers to greater uptake of cycling and walking in the key regional centres as defined in The Regional Transport Strategy were undertaken in Dingwall, Elgin, Keith, Dunoon, Stornoway and Kirkwall. In each case a member of HITRANS staff manages an external consultant who works on the ground with our local authority partners. Some of the outcomes will be considered for funding in 2009/10.

#### Highlands and Islands Fuel Cost

In summer 2008 HITRANS and Partners engaged consultancy firm Experian to undertake research into the fuel price differential recorded at filling stations across the Highlands and Islands. This research was designed to identify the cause of the higher cost of petrol and diesel that was particularly evident in rural and island communities in the Highlands



and Islands. The Consultant has now completed the majority of the brief and it has confirmed the belief that fuel prices are significantly higher in parts of the region than for example the Inner Moray Firth where prices are similar to other parts of Scotland. The

main reason for the fuel cost differential is the low volumes of sales at many filling stations making it difficult to spread the base operating cost. However although less outlets would enable increased volume this is not the answer to the problem as the closure of these facilities could have disastrous effects on rural communities across the region and their long term viability. Having completed this part of the research HITRANS and our partners will now seek to develop mechanisms to support retention of a strategic rural filling station network the loss of which poses such a threat on the sustainability of rural and island communities.

#### Highlands and Islands Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation Issues

In taking forward the research into the fuel cost differential Experian identified a significant threat to the fuel supply chain in the Highlands and Islands posed by the proposed introduction of bio-gasoline across the UK as part of the UK Government's Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) due to the chemical properties of the product. In essence bio gasoline requires more onerous product handling criteria given the propensity to denature when coming into contact with water. This would make it impossible to deliver the product to the pump utilising the existing marine vessel fleet that delivers gasoline (petrol) to many parts of the Highlands and Islands through Inverness and other coastal ports. Furthermore many of the filling stations in the Highlands and Islands are several decades old and the existing storage tanks may potentially allow conditions to exist which would permit water to

## › Research And Strategy Development *continued*

interact with the new fuel thus rendering it unusable. Without swift intervention to come up with a solution to this issue there is a very real risk that the supply chain delivering fuel to the Highlands and Islands will be inoperable and have to be replaced or fuel moved to road tanker delivery. A number of filling stations would in addition have to invest heavily in their storage facilities which given the low sales volumes could force their closure. HITRANS and our partners are working with Scottish Government and the Scotland Office to encourage the Department for Transport to avert the threat posed by this measure and come up with a solution that will ensure the Highlands and Islands is not disadvantaged as a result of the UK's commitment to meeting the increasing EU environmental targets.

### **Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth – Park and Ride Study**

HITRANS commissioned Halcrow to consider the potential for Park and Ride to meet the transport needs of Elgin and Inverness. This included consideration of existing needs and congestion issues affecting key arteries into each city and the study also considered the demand potential in the context of future growth in and around both cities as well as current and future transport policy. For both cities Halcrow looked at potential demand analysing trips from origin and destination survey data, identifying the number of trips that could potentially be attracted to Park & Ride, based on their journey pattern. Further consideration was given to the likelihood of transferring given traffic conditions and transport policy, particularly parking policy.

Based on existing traffic conditions and population Halcrow believe Park and Ride is unlikely to be successful in Elgin at the present time.

Halcrow considered the opportunity for Park and Ride sites to be introduced on the four key arteries into Inverness from North, South, East and West. The study found that Inverness has a high volume of trips on the potential Park and Ride corridors from the North and East that could support the development of Park and Ride. Three sites were recommended for further analysis. These were:

- › North Kessock (north) – 402 car parking spaces
- › Tore (north) – 100 car parking spaces and initially to be developed as a low cost option to test the opportunity.
- › Smithton Junction (east) – 401 car parking spaces

The P&R routes have been looked at for the opportunity to improve bus journey times, by implementing bus priority measures at locations where congestion and delay occur at peak times in and around Inverness.



## › Research And Strategy Development *continued*

**Ferry Service Development through the Oban Hub** – HITRANS commissioned a team of consultants led by Reference Economic Consultants to deliver a study looking at potential development of the network of ferry services currently operated from Oban. This study has been designed to provide useful supporting evidence to feed into the Scottish Ferries Review.

The overall aim of this study is to review the ferry services operating from Oban and to identify and assess options for potential future service developments.

The review of current services is based on existing published information, the HITRANS origin and destination survey and information and comment provided by the client group. The review will include consideration of the quality and future investment needs of existing ferry port infrastructure and land transport links relating to the options being considered.

Options for potential future development are to be drawn up and sifted for appraisal in discussion with the client group who managed the consultants.

Previous studies of service options are being considered, including Mallaig to Lochboisdale; Mull overland serving Barra, South Uist, Coll and Tiree; and the Coll to Tiree fixed link. Options will include linking islands directly rather than via the sound of Mull to Oban.

Consideration is also to be given to the potential of island air services to provide passenger trips for journeys requiring faster links than ferries. The potential for a separate freight only service for west coast ports should also be considered.

The study is ongoing with the final report to be submitted to the HITRANS Board for approval towards the end of 2009.



## › Research And Strategy Development continued

**Oban Interchange Study** – Oban is an important gateway to much of the West Highlands and Islands. The town has a rail connection to Glasgow as well as the trunk road connection via the A85/A82 which is served by bus connections.

There is also a local bus network serving residential and commercial areas of the town and the outlying district. Oban is the major hub for lifeline ferry services to Mull (and Iona), Colonsay, Barra, South Uist, Coll, Tiree and Lismore. In summer there is an additional weekly ferry connection with Islay via Colonsay.

Passenger traffic on all modes of transport is growing and there are planned improvements to the A82 as well as potential for enhancements to the frequency of rail services. In the centre of town there can be considerable congestion around the pier and station area and pedestrian link routes between bus stances, rail service platform and the ferry terminal are poor and unnecessarily lengthy. Considerable space is taken up adjacent to the ferry terminal by an area of rail sidings which are underutilised. A lack of mustering space for cars waiting to board the ferry, following the loss of a car lane due to the opening of the second linkspan, also contributes to the issue.

In considering ways to improve integration and the ferry mustering area at Oban it was agreed that a study should be conducted to establish how the opportunity for integration could be improved between the different modes of travel to the overall benefit of passengers travelling through Oban. The project partners funding the study (Argyll and Bute Council, HITRANS and Caledonian MacBrayne) commissioned AECOM to investigate options.

This engineering appraisal of options is designed to consider the potential for:

- › Improvements to the pedestrian routes between bus, train and ferry services.
- › Reduction of sidings track work to enable additional parking / ferry vehicle marshalling / park and ride.
- › Development of combined / shared rail, ferry, bus passenger terminal facilities.
- › Development of a link road through the ferry terminal to provide drop off zones for buses, taxis etc.

The final output from this study is expected in summer 2009.

### › Intelligent Transport Systems

HITRANS continues to lead the way in Scotland in providing real time information to bus passengers through mobile phone GPRS technology.

#### **On board computer information**

Progress continued towards the implementation of a real time information system to cover the local bus network in the Orkney Islands in partnership with Stagecoach in Orkney. Onboard computers have been fitted to 12 buses in the Orkney fleet that allow the buses to be tracked and transmit up to the second information on the vehicle location to bus passengers at bus stops and mobile phones. A real time bus information website is also in development to give people the latest bus information in the comfort of their own homes and places of work. Displays have been located at Kirkwall Travel Centre, Kirkwall Airport and Stromness Travel Centre with a number of bus stops scheduled to be equipped with LED displays in 2009/10. This system is being supplied by ACIS.

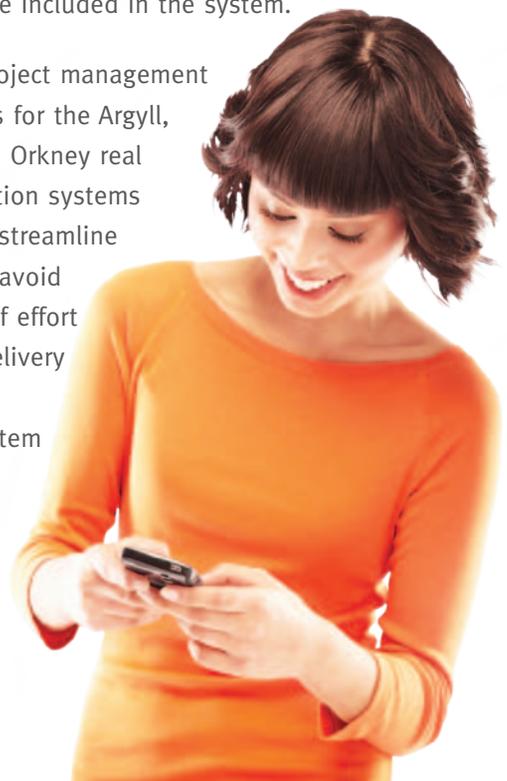
#### **Future expansion**

The ACIS real time information system in Argyll and Bute is being expanded. A total of 24 buses and coaches operating a mix of local and long distance services are fitted with on bus automatic vehicle location tracking computers. Through a partnership with Argyll and Bute Council and the START project HITRANS are developing proposals to expand this coverage further in the period from January 2010 to March 2012. The initial phase of the extension will see real time coverage of all buses operating in Oban and Cowal.

#### **HITRANS deliver real time coverage**

The Inverness real time information system has now been extended with 41 buses fitted with on board automatic vehicle location tracking computers. This means HITRANS has delivered real time coverage to more than half the buses in Inverness. Significant progress has been made on extending this system to cover the remaining buses and Highland Council have appointed ACIS to include the remaining 40 buses in Inverness in the system's coverage. HITRANS will complement this extension through our START project to ensure that the new buses introduced to Service 11 linking Elgin with Inverness Airport will be included in the system.

Combined project management arrangements for the Argyll, Highland and Orkney real time information systems have helped streamline delivery and avoid duplication of effort across the delivery of intelligent transport system solutions to passengers across the Highlands and Islands.



### › Rail development

HITRANS submitted responses to government consultations on integrated ticketing, the East Coast rail capacity review and the ScotRail franchise extension.



In response to criticism of the difference in provision of services on Aberdeen–Inverness between weekday and Sunday we developed a timetable for two additional through services and terminators at Inverurie and Elgin,

service. A comprehensive analysis of the business case produced a benefit to cost ratio of 8.5. DeltaRail were commissioned to identify potential journey time savings on Glasgow–Oban–Fort William–Mallaig, comparing the current timetable against theoretical running times using existing Rules of the Route, gradient profiles and Class 156 rolling stock performance data and with higher loop entry/exit speeds and Class 170 and Class 170 re-engined variants.

To progress timber on rail, we developed lineside loading at Borrobol, and new sidings at Altnabreac. Both can serve as demonstration projects that could be rolled out elsewhere across the area.

In order to develop a HITRANS menu of achievable rail enhancements, consultants examined potential journey time savings through level crossing upgrades on Inverness–Wick. The trend currently is for train speeds across level crossings to be reduced; we need to be able to challenge that scenario with the case for investment. A menu of costs against time saved was derived.

Consultants investigated the options for increasing loop entry/exit speeds through the provision of new motorised point equipment. A technical solution for interfacing with Train Protection Warning System (TPWS) was found.

In December 2008 the North Highland Lines timetable recast was introduced, creating 4 trains per day on Wick and Kyle all year round for the first time ever, as well as new peak services into Inverness and late night weekend trains. Growth on rural routes has been impressive, with passenger numbers doubling at many stations over the last four years. Provision has been made for stops at Conon Bridge; HITRANS is assisting Highland Council and Network Rail with the project.

HITRANS won an ATOC Cycle Rail Award in 2008 for the along with First ScotRail and Transport Scotland for the improved cycle provision in the refurbished 158 fleet. The award was presented by round the world cyclist Mark Beaumont.

The timetabling and business case for 5 trains a day to Oban has been explored. Oban has only three trains per day in each direction – currently the poorest service in Scotland. A benefit to cost ratio of 5.2 has been established for what would be a step change in the service pattern enabling whole and half day trips to Glasgow for local residents as well as improving tourism access. The case has been submitted to Transport Scotland.

### › Bus Service Development

#### **Inverness City and Airport Upgrade**

HITRANS introduced an overhaul of bus services on a number of key corridors in Inverness in July 2007. The project was realised with the support of the Scottish Government who provided £2.084 Million to fund the scheme through their Bus Route Development Grant. The big change that took place to the operation of this scheme in 2008/09 was the change of operator as a result of Stagecoach buying the bus operations of Rapson's Group.

The cornerstone of the scheme was the upgrade of the core service linking Inverness Airport with the City Centre with service frequency increased to a 30 minute headway and the timetable extended for early morning, evening and Sunday operation. The four new highly specified double deck buses operating this route come with excellent luggage capacity and leather seats so they really are bringing business class to bus travel for the Inverness area. The first full year of operation saw extremely positive passenger growth recorded with an increase of nearly 20% in passenger numbers travelling between Inverness City Centre and the Airport.

The arrival of Stagecoach as the operator of the HITRANS funded network of services allowed further improvement with bus links to Croy increased to an hourly frequency from the two hour service established by HITRANS in 2007.

Stagecoach also altered the service operation of the Holm Park and Lochardil services with the new circular routes giving more frequent links to the City Centre.

The scheme also included a new bus link to Nairn from Inverness Airport. This standalone service was designed to be complimentary of existing services and aimed to connect with buses to the Moray Council area. While this service has shown organic growth in passenger numbers volumes have remained low. With Stagecoach now operating both this service and the routes serving Moray it has been possible for HITRANS to begin discussion on extending the core Inverness to Inverness Airport Service 11 to Elgin. This extension will be launched in May 2008 with funding of £60,000 having been committed by HITRANS from the START project. This will cover additional operating costs and Stagecoach are to provide 2 new low floor single deck buses to operate the route. The new buses will be leather seated and branded in the JET livery.



*'Investment in upgrading the core service linking Inverness Airport with the City Centre has been a great success'*

## › Bus Service Development continued

### The Fort Link

The purchase of Rapson's Group bus operations by Stagecoach has made some fleet movement and rationalisation possible in 2008. The introduction of new double deck buses in Inverness was the catalyst for Stagecoach opening discussions with HITRANS on other priority areas which deserved a focus on upgrading services. At the top of HITRANS priority list were the areas and routes covered by Bus Route Development Grant applications we had previously developed and submitted to the Scottish Government. The decision of the Government to roll this fund into the local government block grant meant the two ambitious bids focussing on services in Lochaber and Caithness were left unaffordable in the short term.

Discussions with Stagecoach quickly identified they shared our desire to address the problems of the bus fleet in Lochaber and many of our shared aims could be achieved if HITRANS gave permission to relocate four of the single deck Enviro 200 low floor buses, funded through our Inverness City and Airport bus route project, for use in Lochaber. The arrival of new double deck buses meant this could be achieved without the loss of low floor operation so HITRANS readily agreed to this proposal.

The four Enviro 200 low floor buses supplemented by an additional brand new double deck Enviro 400 provided by Stagecoach were launched as "The Fort Link" on Monday 18th August 2008. Frequencies have been improved on services 41, 44 and 45 and guaranteed low floor vehicle operation is a first for town services 45 and 461. Timetable leaflets are now branded as the Fort Link and a new attractive range of tickets has been introduced including the popular Megarider weekly ticket and with tourism in mind a Day Megarider priced at £2.20 is an attractive option to see the sights of Lochaber.



### › Cearcaill na Gaidhlig

Cearcaill na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic Rings) is a tourism marketing initiative which seeks to create an authentic Gaelic-based cultural tourism experience along routes throughout the Hebridean Islands and West Coast Mainland of Scotland.

Cearcaill na Gàidhlig links a transport journey to the language and cultural heritage of the area, to create the concept of “Gaelic Rings”. Cearcaill na Gàidhlig aims to ensure that improvements in transport infrastructure and services are integrated and accessed in order to boost cultural tourism and Gaelic language-related visitor activity, and to offer an innovative marketing opportunity to businesses undertaking cultural or Gaelic-related activity.

Following a pilot in 2007, five new Cearcaill na Gàidhlig journeys were developed in 2008, allowing wide coverage of the Outer Hebrides and West Highland mainland. Each journey has been documented by well respected authors who have a particular story to

share on the journey they describe. The stories are published in books that accompany the ring and are also available through [www.gaelic-rings.com](http://www.gaelic-rings.com) the web portal for Cearcaill na Gàidhlig.

The project partners behind Cearcaill na Gàidhlig are:

- › Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (lead partner)
- › Argyll and Bute Council
- › Highland Council
- › Visit Scotland
- › Caledonian MacBrayne
- › Comunn na Gàidhlig
- › HITRANS



*‘The [www.gaelic-rings.com](http://www.gaelic-rings.com) website aims to promote the richness of Gaelic language and culture by highlighting the important role Gaelic has played in Scotland’s past and more importantly, its relevance in today’s modern world’*

### › Equalities Scheme

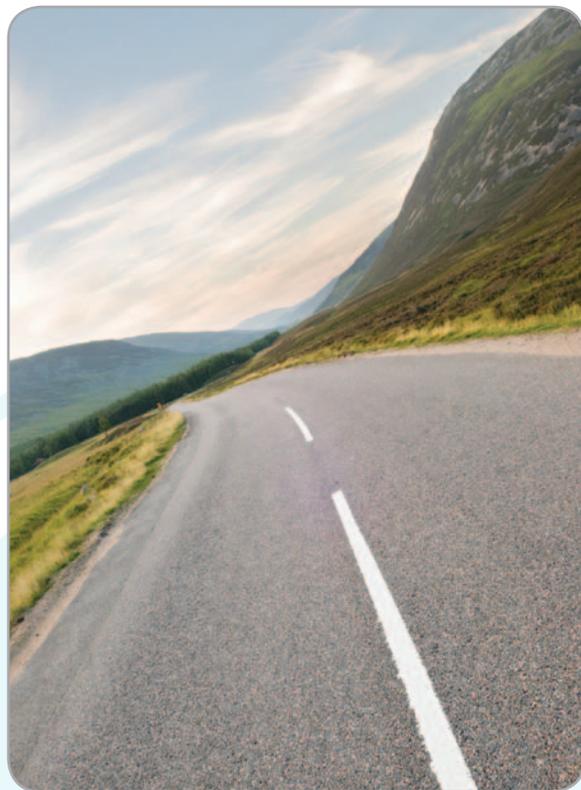
HITRANS as the Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands has statutory duties to have an Equalities Scheme and take very seriously engagement in matters relating to equality.

#### **Promoting equal opportunities**

Since the Partnership was established at the beginning of 2006, we have made significant progress in adopting and implementing policies in the human resources area which have equalities of opportunity enshrined within them. In addition a major theme throughout our Regional Transport Strategy is the need for equality of access to transport facilities and services and through these to jobs, health care, education, shopping and social activities.

We have a statutory duty to publish an equalities scheme under legislation covering Race, Gender and Disability and we chose to introduce a single scheme which addresses what we intend to do in these areas. It also addresses our proposals in other areas as well, for example age, religion/belief and sexuality.

We have chosen to combine these commitments in one equalities scheme rather than publish a series of individual schemes addressing specific legal duties but we have made it clear in the scheme which sectors of society should benefit from our proposals. The publication of this scheme is not the end of our duty to promote equal opportunities but simply the beginning. We hope that stakeholders and service users find this scheme informative and we welcome constructive feedback with a view to its improvement.



*'The Equalities Scheme is the beginning of our journey for equality in areas such as Race, Gender, Disability, Religion/Belief and Sexuality'*

### › Travel planning

HITRANS recognition of the need to reduce over-dependence on the private car for travel was at the core of our Travel Plan policy in 2008/09. This is acknowledged in several sections of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

Good progress has been made in rolling out travel planning policy to all public sector organisations in the Highlands and Islands. With consultancy advice funded by the Energy Savings Trust each local authority and health board in the region has made major progress in developing their organisational travel plans and are now actively implementing measures that have been identified to help employees travel to work as sustainably as possible.

To support employers across the private and public sectors in implementing good travel planning we have produced a set of leaflets aimed at managers and employees which give good advice on the benefits of changing their travel behaviour. We have distributed these leaflets to a number of employers across the region and are happy to meet any requests for copies made by employers. It is widely agreed that a good communications strategy is essential in encouraging the acceptance of Travel Plans.

#### **IfYouCareShare website launched in 2008**

HITRANS launched our journey sharing website in June 2008. The contract to provide the portal was awarded to Jambusters Ltd. In developing a name that people would remember for its simplicity HITRANS arranged a competition where school pupils across the Highlands and Islands would suggest names and themes for the site. The main aim of the site is to encourage people to car share which is good for the environment,

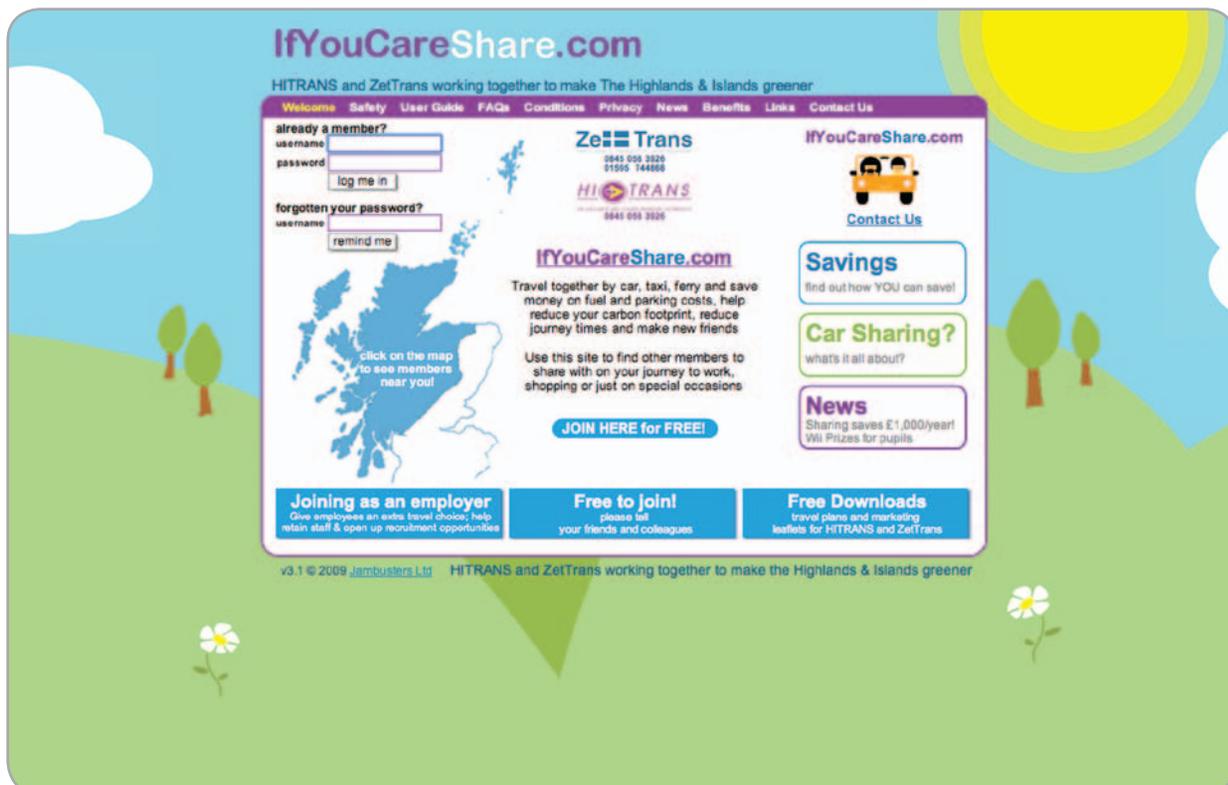
good for our transport network and saves people money too and thanks go to Tom Lane and Effie Ann MacInnes of Paible Secondary School in North Uist who really grasped all this when they came up with **www.IfYouCareShare.com** as the winning name.

#### **HITRANS sustainable travel grant scheme**

**Get Healthy, Get Active!** is HITRANS sustainable travel grant scheme which is a direct intervention by HITRANS to encourage sustainable travel. This grant scheme allows employers and organisations from the voluntary, public and private sectors to apply to HITRANS to share the cost of providing facilities at workplaces to encourage sustainable travel. An application form detailing the criteria for the scheme has been printed and is available to download at **www.hitrans.org.uk**.

In 2008/09 successful applications were submitted by Highlands and Islands Airports Limited and Moray Council. HITRANS funded £21,480 which was 50% of the total project costs.

HITRANS has worked closely with the Scottish Executive, local authorities, and with other Regional Transport Partnerships to develop shared experience in delivery of travel plans. We have played an active part in encouraging the activities of the Scottish Sustainable Travel Group and the ACT TravelWise Association in Scotland.



*'The IfYouCareShare.com website aims to encourage people to car share, which is good for our transport network and saves people money!'*

### › Stakeholder Engagement

#### Active Travel Advisory Group

The Active Travel Advisory Group (ATAG) meets three times per year under the chairmanship of Moray Council's Chris Thompson and is attended by local authority transport officers, Sustrans, cycle campaigners, access officers, representatives from the health sector and transport operators.

The group has been engaged in the Active Travel Audit process and acts as a forum for those interested in the greenest form of transport to share ideas and expertise.

#### Ferry Consultation Arrangements

The Scottish Government tasked the Regional Transport Partnerships to put in place arrangements to provide consultative mechanisms between the operator, users and public agencies for the ferry network serving the Clyde, Hebrides, and Northern Isles.

The first line of consultation is between island groups and the ferry operator (Tier 1), with three second tier committees largely concerned with longer term planning and route development. The arrangements are now well established and the Tier 1 groups met twice in 2008/09.

There are six ferry user groups covering. These are:

- › Clyde (Arran Bute, Cumbrae and Cowal including Kilcreggan)
- › Argyll (Mull, Iona, Lismore, Coll and Tiree, Barra and South Uist, Colonsay, Islay and Gigha)
- › Hebrides (Barra, the Uists, Lewis and Harris)
- › Raasay, Skye and the Small Isles, Ardnamuchan and Mull

- › Orkney
- › Shetland

#### Regional Bus Forum

The HITRANS Board has established a Regional Bus Forum to meet annually to consider matters relating to bus transport in the Highlands and Islands. The Regional Bus Forum aims to allow stakeholders to feed back to the Partnership on regionally significant bus developments and related matters. The objectives of the Regional Bus Forum are to:

- › Work with partners on cross-boundary bus and integration objectives
- › Support the development of a common approach to bus information and publicity.
- › Support the development of integrated ticketing across all Council areas.
- › Develop proposals to support delivery of modal shift to bus to be taken forward along with key partners, potentially looking towards the development of Statutory Quality Partnerships.

#### Aviation Consultation Group



Our strategy for aviation is to enhance connectivity within the region and to our national gateways; to increase links with countries outside the UK; to retain the London services particularly through Heathrow and Gatwick; and to manage the environmental impact of aviation on the region without adversely affecting economic growth and sustainability of our communities.

## › Stakeholder Engagement continued

To help us take forward these strategic aspirations HITRANS has established the Aviation Consultation Group with membership drawn from representatives of our key aviation stakeholders. The Group is chaired by HITRANS Board Member Wilson Metcalfe who brings a wealth of practical real world experience to the Group. The Aviation Consultation Group met in September 2008.

### **Rail Stakeholder Engagement**

HITRANS runs three tiers of Rail Forums.

**The Rail Advisory Group (RAG)** is the working group consisting of representatives from HITRANS, Network Rail, First ScotRail, Passenger Focus, Transport Scotland and local authority transport officers. This body meets 3-4 times per year and directly informs HITRANS policy and workstreams.

**The Rail Stakeholder Group (RSG)** acts as the umbrella group for wider industry, public sector, voluntary and heritage interests and features formal presentations from leading industry figures in a conference style format.

**The Rail Users Group (RUG)** covers the voluntary rail user groups for the rural North Highland and West Highland Lines. Chaired by Robert Samson of Passenger Focus, this forum enables the views of the members of the groups to engage with HITRANS in twice yearly meetings. Their views are then taken by Passenger Focus to the Rail Advisory Group.

### **Highlands and Islands Community and Voluntary Transport Forum**

Shortly after the establishment of the statutory

HITRANS we established the Highlands and Islands Community and Voluntary Transport Forum. This formalised the existing strong links in place across the third sector transport providers in the Highlands and Islands and the very positive work of the Community Transport Association in Scotland.

The object of the Forum is to promote recognition of the voluntary and community transport sector, to encourage training, good practice and sharing of ideas among the community transport forums already established in each constituent local authority area. In furtherance of this the Forum provides advice to HITRANS in the development and implementation of The Regional Transport Strategy.

### **Freight Forum**

Meeting twice year yearly the HITRANS Freight Forum (HFF) draws together local authority representatives, logistics providers and users of freight services. The Forum concentrates on practical Highland issues, and has involved visits to the new Russells/Stobart/DRS rail freight terminal in Inverness and to the new Inverness Harbour developments, as well as exploring the problems of timber transport. The establishment of a Freight Quality Partnership has been explored.

### **Transport Coordinators Group**

The HITRANS Transport Coordinating Officers Group (HITCOG) is formed of officers from HITRANS and local authority transport officers and aims to deal with technical issues and share good practice in relation to the management and delivery of passenger transport coordination across the Highlands and Islands.

### > Budget

The annual budget for 2008/9 totalled £1,590,940.

**Scottish Government – 85.4% (£1,358,494)**



**Local Authority – 12.6% (£200,000)**

**Other – 2% (£32,446)**

Highland Council – 5.6% (£88,800)

CnES – 1.2% (£18,900)

Argyll & Bute Council – 1.8% (£28,700)

Moray Council – 2.9% (£46,400)

Orkney Islands Council – 1.1% (£17,200)

Budget Headings	Budget
<b>Income comprised:</b>	
Councils	£200,000
Scottish Government – Match Funding	£200,000
Scottish Government – Travel Plan Work	£107,000
Scottish Government – Strategy Development	£415,000
Scottish Government – Bus Route Development Scheme	£636,494
Orkney Islands Council – Maternity Cover Income	£26,457
Other Misc Income	£5,802
Interest on Revenue Balances	£187
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£1,590,940</b>

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## › Budget continued

Budget Headings	Budget
<b>Direct running costs:</b>	
Director	£89,369
Programme Managers	£112,484
Office Managers	£50,973
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£24,875
Members and Advisers Travel and Subsistence	£8,420
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£19,989
Office Costs – Property	£18,500
Office Costs – Admin	£28,548
<b>Total running costs</b>	<b>£353,158</b>
<b>Programme costs:</b>	
Publicity	£15,099
Travel Plan Work	£107,189
Research & Strategy Development	£346,190
Inverness City and Airport BRDG Scheme	£636,494
Orkney Islands Council – Maternity Cover Costs	£25,055
Loss of 2007/08 Travel Plan Grant	£35,000
2007/08 Deficit	£17,555
<b>Total programme costs</b>	<b>£1,182,582</b>
<b>Finance and Administrative Services</b>	<b>£39,281</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>£1,575,021</b>
<b>Underspend</b>	<b>£15,919</b>



*The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership*

**ROAD TRANSPORT • FERRY • RAIL • AIR TRAVEL • CYCLING • WALKING**

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